

My parents use Comcast for their cable provider. And in my experience with them involving other members of my family and friends, we have routinely been double-billed, overcharged, and charged for things we didn't order or ask for in our/their service package.

You might say we have the freedom to choose what service provider we can use, but that, in fact, is a fallacy. There are two cable services in our nearby Johnson City, TN. One of my friends routinely gets stuck with whatever cable/internet service provider depending on where he lives, because Comcast and Charter collaborate to split up their areas of business, and will not uniformly provide their services to ALL of the residents based off of this. So quite literally, somebody across the street can only order Comcast, whereas somebody else down the block can ONLY order Charter. Does that sound like a free market to you? Or more like a monopoly?

My parents have always ordered the basic cable package for what I find to be an obscene amount of money. It's upwards of 60 dollars for NO movie channels, no specially ordered channels, NOTHING. And just recently they removed the History Channel, among others, from their basic cable service, and INCREASED THE AMOUNT THEY CHARGED FOR THEIR BASIC CABLE. Does this make any sense to you? It sure doesn't to me. I would think that if you diminished your services, you would charge LESS for them, not more.

If I do recall correctly, I saw a recorded account of Fred Rogers appearing before Congress to propose the creation of PBS. This guy advocated the potential of using television to help people learn, AND entertain. But even he said that he in no way advocated censorship, even of things he found objectionable. He even advocated the right of recording TV programs when taped recordings of broadcasts became an issue at the time. He even went so far as to say that anything that gives a person more control over their lives is a good thing.

And the internet is the ultimate realization of that statement. It gives total freedom to learn what we want, whenever we want, on a whim, or by necessity. We have the freedom to call up references typed up by people who have personal experience with what we are trying to find out, or we can even talk to them in real time, if possible.

The true potential of the internet has just barely scratched the surface. We have alternatives to the ironclad domestic news networks now that have degenerated more into entertainment and armchair-quarterbacking for political interests, and not OUR interests. Musicians and artists have a means to get their works out into the public and even make money off their services without having to sell their souls off to monolithic music companies who use red tape and contractual obligations to squeeze every penny out of their "assets" until they are simply discarded.

And that's merely the tip of the iceberg. Selfish interests (lobbyists and the companies they

represent) have pandered to our government for a long time now, and the government has acted in their own self-interest, rather than for their constituents. We've been dumbed down with rhetoric that is supposed to pass for news and political commentary. We've been taught that we don't need to be fiscally responsible, we can simply throw money at the problem until it goes away. And lastly, we've been taught not to think, and not to question. We've been taught to be complacent. To be consumers.

And you have tried to legislate morality, which is perposterous because morality is a subjective thing, relative to each and every person, and personal for each individual. You've made it your mission to advocate the government intruding on your citizens' right to choice by dictating what is or is not moral for us. You should be advocating personal responsibility, and tolerance, NOT censorship of things that we may find inconvenient or offensive. Reality can be far more obscene and traumatizing than any TV program, as my father, a Vietnam vet, could advocate quite well, if he were alive today.

But that's the problem we now face as a nation: You (the government, which you are a part of), have helped to foster a mentality of selfishness, and irresponsibility in our country: Fiscally, socially, and politically. We are up to our eyes in debt because we cannot stop spending when we should be cutting back our budget and making great pains to pay back our debt. Socially, we are dumbed down because the monopolies on our airwaves prevents us from hearing music beyond Clearchannel and their associates own bands, among other things. Politically our farce of a news network has helped to foster a sports-team mentality of "us vs. them" in this country that is counter-intuitive towards maintaining a functioning, healthy society.

There was so much I learned about from the internet: Bands that I would have never heard of if not for the internet. Scientific theories that I would have never heard of. People I would have never met. We are entering the 21st Century, but many private interests are clinging desperately to their old ways for instant-gratification in their quest for money, but they sacrifice far more in the long-run for all of us by doing so. We've seen that now with the banking crisis, with the Big 3, and with Enron, among many others. This is no different. They (and you) want to control what we know, and shape how we think so that we will continue to be docile and consume.

But as I said this is anathema to maintaining a functioning, healthy society. Your collective advocacy of selfishness and irresponsibility has bred a society who knows little else. There's only loyalty to ourselves, and our own immediate interests. And you can't maintain a society with people like that. Sooner or later the bottom will drop out, and it'll be a sight to behold, I can assure you.

You're a part of the problem, but you can stop doing so by at least allowing those of us who have the sense to read between the lines and not buy into the rhetoric to find the truth and learn about what you don't want us to know for ourselves. There must be net neutrality, or you will simply be sticking

your head under the guillotine to spite your body.